SCRIPTS BITS! – SPECIAL EDITION
The Road to Year One – Part Three

It was March of 2006 when *Sonic the Hedgehog #160* hit the shelves. Its lead story, "Birthday Bash!," was my debut on the Sonic scene as the new lead writer. It was a very exciting time for me and for a number of Sonic readers who'd known me for my works in the fandom. What most didn't know at that point was I'd been among the staff for five months already. Four years before *that* I was still applying to become a writer for the title.

The first application was an abysmal failure for many good reasons. The scripts were unpolished, there were no letters of intent or recommendation, and I didn't provide the pivotal self-addressed and stamped envelope. Newbie mistakes and I learned from them. The scripts were revised and new applications were made and sent. It wasn't until October of 2005 that editor Mike Pellerito took a chance with a college undergraduate and showed him the ropes. What was it in that final application package that caught his eye?

Now you get to find out.

It's March 2007 and we've reached my thirteenth consecutive issue on *Sonic the Hedgehog* – my first full year on the comic. To commemorate coming full circle I'll be doing three sets of special Script Bits! You'll be able to see what got me in the door and, in comparison to the other Script Bits!, see just how far I came since I joined the team in 2005.

The added bonus is that you will be able to see **the entire scripts.** These scripts will never be published and all of the plot points in them have been rendered moot or have already evolved into stories you've seen. As with all Script Bits!, I'll go into some detail and try to provide some insight into the scripts. This final edition will feature the two eleven-page leads I submitted in the final application package. You'll find the material on the following pages:

Table of Contents

Script Bits! on "Saving Face"	p. 1
"Saving Face"	p. 2
Script Bits! on "Rune Gate"	p. 12
"Rune Gate"	p. 12

Remembering "Saving Face"

"Saving Face" was meant to be small and simple. Looking back this would've made for a terrible lead story. We get a little bit of advancement on Tails's character but there's nothing here that couldn't be told in a back-up, much less affecting the over-all plot of the series.

To its credit, though, it is simple and simple is always good. Any new reader would be able to pick this up and understand the relationships and the motivations. We get a little action, I'd like to think there are some amusing moments, and it's heavy in continuity. That right there is the foundation of the scripts that would later come to be.

It's also fun looking back on this with all that's happened in the book and the franchise. The references to the mysterious SHADOW Bot's existence, to Fiona, and to jewel thievery were all done without any greater plan in mind and well before Rouge hit the scene.

Title: Saving Face
Pages: 11 pages

Page 1

[Panel 1]

A seedy side of the forest - more specifically, the Bottom of the Barrel Bar & Grill (S#40). It is night, and the darkness does little to hide the run-down look of the place. Nic and Nack make their way towards the BBB&G.

Dialogue Box : THE BOTTOM OF THE BARREL BAR & GRILL - BADLANDS

[Panel 2]

Nic eyes the establishment with a healthy amount of uncertainty. Nack is the complete opposite, totally at ease.

Nic: AND YOU USED TO HANG OUT HERE?

Nack: OF COURSE! SURE, IT'S A LITTLE WEATHER-BEATEN, BUT IT'S GOT A HOMEY FEEL TO IT.

[Panel 3]

Nic and Nack reach the door, which is guarded by a massive brute of a gorilla. Nic gives Nack a droll look while he greets the gorilla.

Nic: HOMEY...SURE.

Nack: BRUTUS! LONG TIME NO SEE! YOU GUYS KEPT MY TABLE FOR ME, RIGHT?

[Panel 4]

From within the doorway, we see the gorilla's arm shoot across, blocking the entrance. Nack staggers back, eyes wide.

Sound FX: WHUMP!

[Panel 5] The gorilla glares stonily down at Nack.

Gorilla: YOU AREN'T WELCOME HERE NO MORE. NOT AFTER SONIC BUSTED UP THE JOINT.

Page 2

[Panel 1]

From the shoulder of the glowering gorilla, we see him looking down at Nack. Nack smiles smoothly.

Nack: AH, BUT THAT ALL CHANGES THANKS TO WHAT I BROUGHT. NIC?

[Panel 2]

Still on the shoulder, the gorilla looks at Nic. Nic looks back, bored, her arms crossed.

Nic: DON'T LOOK AT ME. I'M JUST A DISTRACTION.

[Panel 3]

Still on the shoulder, the gorilla looks back to where Nack was, alarmed. Sure enough, the weasel's gone.

[Panel 4]

Still on the shoulder, the gorilla looks back for Nic, who's also gone.

[Panel 5]

The gorilla roars, fists clenched.

Gorilla: AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAUGH!

[Panel 6]

Nack and Nic stand at the counter, Nic looking distrustful, Nack casual and happy as he waves a greeting. Numerous dangerous and grungy looking Mobians glower back.

Nack: HEY GUYS. WHO MISSED ME?

Page 3

[Panel 1] Nack and Nic turn to the bartender who gives them an ugly smirk.

Bartender: SO YOU FINALLY CAME SLINKIN' BACK, EH?

Nack: YEAH. I'M REALLY FEELING THE LOVE IN THIS LUKE-WARM RECEPTION!

[Panel 2] The bartender leans on the bar, challenging Nack hotly. Nack mirrors him, while Nic begins to smirk behind him.

Bartender: WHAT DO YOU WANT? YOU'RE A HAS-BEEN, NACK! YOU'RE ALL WASHED UP!

Nack: OF ALL THE...I'M STILL THE BEST THERE EVER IS, WAS, OR WILL BE!

[Panel 3]
The bartender leans back, crossing his arms confidently. Nack is at a loss for words, which only serves to make him angrier. Nic leans on the bar, smiling more broadly.

Bartender: YEAH? LIKE HOW YOU GOT THROWN INTO THE TANK BY YOUR OWN QUARRY?

Nack: ULP! BUT...I MEAN..THAT WAS SONIC! AND..AND...

Bartender: Y'HEAR THAT BOYS...

[Panel 4]
The bartender calls out the entire room, which takes the foreground. The lowlifes laugh uproariously as Nack tenses at the counter, not even turning his head.

Bartender: ..HE'S MAKIN' EXCUSES NOW! HAW!

(Laughter from the Mobians)

[Panel 5]
The gorilla storms in, snarling. Nack stalks past him, glowering. Nic follows, a hand over her muzzle, stifling laughter of her own.

Gorilla: ALRIGHT, NACK! YOU GOTTA...

Nack: YEAH, YEAH. I'M GOING ALREADY.
Page 4

[Panel 1]

Outside, Nic gives up and allows herself to laugh. Nack looks disturbingly angry.

Nic: AH-HA-HA! OH MAN, NACK! I'M SORRY, BUT THAT WAS SAD!

Nack: YEAH, THANKS SIS.

[Panel 2]

Nic catches up to Nack and places a hand on his shoulder.

Nic: OH COME ON NOW, NACK. YOU'VE GOTTA LEARN TO LAUGH AT YOURSEL...

Nack: NO...

[Panel 3]

Nic stops as Nack walks on, into the background.

Nack: I WAS THE MOST RESPECTED BOUNTY HUNTER BEFORE SONIC RUINED MY NAME...

[Panel 4]

Close-up on Nack's face as he pulls the brim of his hat close over his eyes.

Nack: THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY I CAN SAVE FACE...

[Panel 5]

Great Forest. The broadleaf trees dominate the scene. A lone Shadow-Bot wanders through the forest aimlessly. We see the familiar silhouette of Tails and Sonic hiding behind the trees behind it.

Page 5

[Panel 1]

Sonic smirks, looking to Tails across the path. Tails gives Sonic a nervous thumbs-up.

Sonic: READY TO TAKE ON YOUR OWN BOT SOLO, LIL BRO?

Tails: READY...I THINK...

[Panel 2]

Tails dashes from behind his tree, his tails spinning behind him for extra speed. Sonic cheers him on.

Sonic: NO WORRIES! I'M RIGHT BEHIND YA!

[Panel 3]

Tails rushes past the Shadow-Bot, catching its attention.

[Panel 4]

Tails skids to a stop in front of the Shadow-Bot. It raises its arm-mounted laser to the fox.

Shadow-Bot : HALT! YOU WILL SURRENDER TO ROBTICIZATION BY THE ORDER OF DR. ROBOTNIK!

[Panel 5]

Tails leaps, then flies over the Shadow-Bot, then drops down immediately behind it. It fires a few shots, its arm trailing after where Tails was a moment before.

[Panel 6]

Tails twirls in place, his tails knocking the legs out from under the Shadow-Bot. It topples, its head smashing off in a spray of sparks.

Page 6

[Panel 1]

Sonic zips up to Tails' side, patting him on the shoulder. Tails smiles weakly up at Sonic and wipes some sweat from his brow.

Sonic: WAY TO GO, TAILS! YOU'LL BE GIVING ME A RUN FOR MY MONEY ONE OF THESE DAYS!

Tails: THANKS, SONIC! THAT WAS A LITTLE SCARY, THOUGH.

[Panel 2]

Sonic smirks, flipping the robot's head up into his hand with a small kick. Tails looks into the body through the opened neck.

Sonic: AT FIRST, BUT TRUST ME, IT GETS TO BE AS EASY AS FALLING OFF A LOG.

Tails: IF YOU SAY SO. ME, I'D BE JUST AS INTERESTED IN LOOKING AT HOW THIS THING WORKS.

[Panel 3]

Sonic hands off the head to Tails while frowning into the distance. Tails takes it, looking curiously to Sonic.

Sonic: THEY **SHOULDN'T** BE WORKING, IS THE THING. ROBOTNIK'S ENTIRE NUCLEAR ARSENAL BLEW WHEN THOSE MISSILES HIT - THERE SHOULDN'T BE ANYTHING BUT SLAG!

Tails: MAYBE THESE ARE JUST LEFT-OVER SENTRIES, OR SOMETHING?

[Panel 4]

Tails tugs on Sonic's arm, excitedly. Sonic grins, being tugged along somewhat.

Tails: COME ON! LET'S GET BACK TO KNOTHOLE! I BET ROTOR AND UNCLE CHUCK WOULD LOVE TO LOOK AT THIS!

Sonic: YEAH, BUT HOW'RE WE GOING TO LUG IT BACK TO KNOTHOLE?!

Page 7

[Panel 1]

The same scene from the previous panel, but seen through a high-tech set of binoculars.

[Panel 2]

Nic leans against a tree idly inspecting a hunting knife. Nack leans on a fallen tree, peering through his binoculars.

Nic: YOU CAN MAKE A NAME FOR YOURSELF AS A JEWEL-THIEF, Y'KNOW. YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS.

Nack: HE RUINED MY NAME, THREW ME IN JAIL, TRASHED MY BIKE - AND I NEVER SAW A CENT FOR IT! I'M GETTING MY REVENGE, NIC.

[Panel 3]

Nic sighs heavily. Nack looks up crossly from his binoculars.

Nic: *SIGH* IF I REALLY WANTED TO DEAL WITH PERSONAL VENDETTAS, I WOULD'VE STAYED WITH FIONA!

Nack: I DON'T RECALL EVER WANTING TO PARTNER WITH YOU IN THE FIRST PLACE!

[Panel 4]

Nic huffs off. Nack looks back to his binoculars.

Nic: FINE THEN! YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN!

Nack: [quietly] THANK YOU...

[Panel 5]

Back to the view through the binoculars. We see Sonic and Tails walking away, Tails with the robot's head under his arm.

Nack: ALRIGHT THEN, MR. SONIC...

Page 8

[Panel 1]

The front view of Sonic and Tails as they walk along. Sonic laughs aloud, Tails beaming.

Dialogue Box : "...SHALL WE DANCE?"

Tails: ...AND YOU SHOULD'VE SEEN THE LOOK ON ANTOINE'S FACE!

Sonic: HA-HA! THAT'S CLASSIC!

[Panel 2]

Sonic and Tails look surprised as a bolo suddenly wraps Sonic from behind.

Sound FX: THWIP-THWIP-THWIP!

Sonic: HEY!

Tails: WHAT - - ?!

[Panel 3]

Sonic collapses to the side, struggling. Tails, still holding the robot's head, hurries to his side.

Tails: SONIC! ARE YOU...?!

Sonic: I'M FINE! I'LL CUT THROUGH THESE WITH MY SPINES IN ANOTHER SECOND!

[Panel 4]

Sonic watches Tails, horrified, as a giant metal bracket strikes him. Tails holds up the robot's head, shielding himself somewhat, but the bracket punches through it, the ends around his sides.

Nack: (off-panel) ALL THE TIME I NEED!

Tails: AAAAAH!

Sonic: TAILS!

[Panel 5] Tails hits a tree backwards, the bracket holding him to the trunk.

Page 9

[Panel 1]

Sonic and Tails look up from their captive positions, shocked to see Nack standing triumphantly, his rifle at his side.

Sonic: NACK!

Nack: HAPPY TO SEE ME?

[Panel 2]

A close-up on Sonic's back-spines as the cut through the last of his binds.

[Panel 3]

Sonic gets to his feet, scowling. Nack smirks cruelly.

Sonic: ONLY WHEN THERE'S A ROW OF BARS IN FRONT OF YOU! WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?

Nack: RECLAIMING THE THRONE AS THE GREATEST, TITLE-WRECKER.

[Panel 4]

Sonic mirrors Tails' attack on the Shadow-Bot. He leaps at Nack, goes into a spin over his head, then drops behind him. Nack fires his rifle, trailing Sonic's arc of motion.

Sonic: HA! THAT'S MY SEAT, SNAGGLE-TOOTH!

[Panel 5]

Sonic leg-sweeps Nack, who collapses onto his back.

[Panel 6]
A worm's-eye-view of Sonic as he smirks down at the reader (Nack).

Sonic: FACE FACTS, NACK! YOU CAN HARDLY CATCH A COLD, MUCH LESS ME!

[Panel 7] The metal plate on Nack's hand crackles with electricity.

Nack: NO, I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO CATCH YOU...

Page 10

[Panel 1]

Nack hits Sonic in the ankle, zapping him.

Nack: IT'S HOLDING ONTO YOU THAT'S THE TRICK!

Sonic: AAAUGH!

[Panel 2]

Nack stands, dusting off his hat in his hands and glowering at the unconscious Sonic.

Nack: NOW, AFTER I DRAG YOU BACK TO THE THREE-B-G...

[Panel 3]

3/4ths behind Tails' tree, we see Tails struggling, his arms pinned under the robot's head. Nack and Sonic are in the foreground.

Nack: ...I'LL SEE IF ROBOTNIK IS STILL INTERESTED IN YOU. I DON'T EVEN CARE IF I GET PAID THIS TIME!

Tails: [thinking] UGH! THE SHADOW-BOT HELMET STOPPED MOST OF THE FORCE FROM THIS THING...IT'S NOT BURIED TOO DEEP...I'M...ALMOST...

[Panel 4]
Nack bends over to pick up Sonic, but looks up in surprise as Tails pushed himself free of the bracket, still holding to the robot's head.

Tails: FREE!

Nack: HUH?

[Panel 5]
From behind him, we see Tails point at Nack while he holds the robot head to his side. Nack smirks, his rifle against his shoulder.

Tails: LEAVE HIM ALONE!

NACK: HEH HEH, CUTE, KID. REAL CUTE. NOW RUN ALONG BEFORE YOU GET HURT.

Page 11

[Panel 1]

Tails flings the robot head at Nack like a frisbee. Nack drops back a step, blasting it out of the air.

Tails: I SAID LEAVE HIM ALONE!

Nack: YOW!

[Panel 2]

Tails zips up to Nack, twirling in place and knocking Nack's gun from his hands with his tails.

Sound FX: THWACK!

Nack: OW! HEY!

[Panel 3]

Sonic begins to come to as Tails manages to pick Nack up in his tails and spin him around. We see a trail of flailing hands and a ring of eyes as Nack spins.

Nack: AAAAAAAAAAAIEEEEEEEEE!

[Panel 4]

A long panel. In the distant background, Tails stops, an action line arcing up from him. In the close foreground, the action line follows Nack as he lands against the toppled Shadow-Bot.

Sound FX with Tails: FLING!

Sound FX with Nack: CLONK!

[Panel 5] Sonic lays a hand on Tails' shoulder, smiling thankfully as his quills smoke a little.

Sonic: WOW...WAY TO GO! I WAS AFRAID HE HAD ME THERE FOR A SECOND!

[Panel 6] Tails beams to Sonic. Sonic shoots back a warning smirk.

Tails: NO WORRIES! I WAS ALWAYS RIGHT BEHIND YA!

Dialogue Box : END!

Remembering "Rune Gate"

This is perhaps the single most important script in the application package. This is the one script that existed from the very beginning and was revised time and time again. In this script you can see the foundations of a lot to come from my first year.

There is a lot of "The Darkest Storm" in here. Sir Connery's return was something I'd wanted to get to from the beginning as well as resolving his plot of hunting the dark magic users, namely Damocles.

The return of Ixis Naugus as a villain was another milestone I was aiming for. "Rune Gate" was intended to be a threat of the villain's return and would set the stage for his eventual come-back. His actual return on the comic has taken many twists and turns I hadn't anticipated, but the direction he's going now – I think – is far more interesting.

We also see shades of "Order from Chaos" where Tails invokes his Chosen One status. My pre-hired-days plan for the Chosen One and all issues surrounding him were much more time-consuming. While I might've enjoyed a touch more set-up to what eventually came to be, I like the end product better.

This is my personal favorite out of all you've read, especially how Sonic defeats the villains' plans in the end.

Thank you for coming with me on this retrospective journey. I hope it's been fun and informative, and I hope you enjoy the many stories to come!

Title: Rune Gate

-Page 1-

1 - Knothole Village - the villa outside Castle Acorn. The Freedom Fighters (Sonic, Tails, Rotor, Bunnie, Antoine) walk together towards the main gate. Tails speaks up to Sonic, who shrugs with a breezy smile.

TAILS
Why do you think the King wants to see all of us, Sonic?

SONIC
No clue, little bro, but here's hoping it means we get to see some action!

2 - The throne room of Castle Acorn. Mobian guards sparsely line the walls. King Acorn is in the foreground, 3/4ths back to us. The unidentifiable form of Sir Connery (S#45) at his side. They look on as the Freedom Fighters enter into the throne room.

KING
Ah, here they are! May I introduce . . .

3 - Group shot. Sonic, and Tails take the focus, Antoine and Bunnie to one side, Rotor on the other.

DIALOGUE BOX
. . . THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS!

SONIC
You rang, your majesty?

4 - From behind the silhouetted heads of the Freedom Fighters, we see King and Queen Acorn sitting side-by-side. Sir Connery stands at the King's shoulder, Sally at the Queen's.

KING
I did indeed, Sonic. A dire matter has arisen. I believe my paladin here can explain it best.

-Page 2-

1 - Sir Connery steps forward, offering a slight bow to the Freedom Fighters.

CONNERY
It is an honor, Freedom Fighters. I am Sir Connery the Paladin, former Knight of the Kingdom of Acorn.

TAILS
Former?

SONIC (small text - under his breath)
Welcome to the club.

2 - Close up on Sir Connery. Behind him, we get a slight flashback of him holding a sword over his head while the three masks of the Ancient Walkers look down on him.

CONNERY
Yes, former. Shortly after the end of the First Great War, I was summoned for a holy quest by the Ancient Walkers. I was to rid the world of all dark magic.

3 - Connery continues to address the Freedom Fighters

CONNERY
While I was reluctant to leave the service of my king, I could not deny the will of the Walkers. I have spent the past decade tracking down those who would do ill to Mobius.

4 - Sonic crosses his arms and looks unimpressed. Tails stifles a giggle while Sally looks mildly shocked/cross.

SONIC
Yeah? So where were you when we had to deal with Ixis Naugus and Mammoth Mogul?

SALLY
SONIC!

5 - Sir Connery raises a calming hand.

CONNERY
He is right to ask, your highness. In fact, the former is why I am here today.

-Page 3-

1 - Rotor exclaims and all the Freedom Fighters show varying degrees of surprise. Sonic rolls his eyes.

ROTOR
You mean Ixis Naugus is back?

SONIC
Sheesh. Will that creep ever give it a rest?

2 - Sir Connery's face in profile. Again, the panel is predominately flashback. We see the Rune Gate - a rock ring set into a cavern wall. Each stone is marked with a runic symbol.

CONNERY
Naugus is not in our world - at least, not yet. When he was banished to the Zone of Silence years ago, he spent a great deal of time trying to remotely open and ancient magic portal. It was a difficult process, one which he never finished when another doorway was opened for him.

3 -Rotor sighs dejectedly. Bunnie pats him on the shoulder as Antoine comments. Sonic grins at Antoine.

ROTOR
Yeah, that was my fault. I hoped we could learn something about the king's former crystallization in there.

BUNNIE
No one blames ya, sugah. Yo' intentions were good.

ANTOINE
Oui, despite their disastrous outcome.

SONIC
Like you've got a flawless record, 'Twan.

4 - Sally approaches Sir Connery.

SALLY
But since he was locked away again, he's been trying to finish his work on the magic portal.

CONNERY
Exactly, Princess. I believe he is quite close to activating the Rune Gate. But the entrance to its cave is well guarded. I came to King Acorn looking for assistance.

-Page 3 Continued-

5 - Another group shot, each Freedom Fighter looking confident and ready. Sonic hooks a thumb to his chest with a confident smirk.

SONIC
Quit with the long face, then. We're just the heroes you need!

-Page 4-

1 - The Mobian Mountains. Sir Connery and the Freedom Fighters make their way through the sparse mountain valley. The Freedom Fighters are dressed warmly. Small patches of snow litter the ground. We get the idea it's rather windy here. Tails flies above the line - with some difficulty.

DIALOGUE BOX
And so . . .

2 - Sonic grumbles to himself, to the mild amusement of Rotor. Sally walks by Sir Connery's side.

SONIC
Why can't any of these ancient relics and gates and junk be hidden on a sunny beach?

SALLY
Sir Connery, Naugus has plagued us for so long . . . is there any other way he could come back aside from the Rune Gate?

CONNERY
No, Princess. Once we lock the Rune Gate, Naugus will be trapped forever.

3 - Bunnie looks up just as Tails gets blown back by a larger gust of wind.

4 - Antoine smiles a little as Bunnie catches Tails' foot with her bionic arm. Tails smiles sheepishly.

BUNNIE
Careful, Tails-sugah. Why don't you walk down here with the rest of us?

TAILS
Aw, alright Aunt Bunnie.

5 - Sonic looks up to Rotor, arching an eyebrow. Rotor's brow is knitted in thought.

-Page 5-

1 - Sonic addresses Rotor with a grin. Rotor replies, still thinking.

SONIC
Yo Rote! If you think any harder, smoke will come out of your ears.

ROTOR
Hmm? Oh! Sorry, I'm just a little confused.

2 - Sonic hooks a thumb over his shoulder. Rotor continues, uninterrupted by Sonic's joking.

SONIC
Really? That was usually Antoine's job . . .

ROTOR
I mean, if Sir Connery was able to handle so many dark magicians over the past, why can't he disable the Rune Gate by himself?

3 - Sonic frowns a little, jumping on the mental bandwagon. Rotor looks to Sonic.

SONIC
Well, he said it was well guarded. Maybe he needs a little extra muscle?

ROTOR
But he's a former Knight of Acorn with the Ancient Walkers on his side. How could be possibly lose?

4 - From behind Sonic and Rotor, we see the two of them eye Sir Connery's back warily.

SONIC
Touche. We'll just have to keep an eye on him, won't we?

ROTOR
Right.

-Page 6-

1 - The Freedom Fighters gather on a hill. Sir Connery points to a foreboding cavern entrance.

CONNERY
There is the cavern that holds the Rune Gate. The perils will be numerous. I believe it best if we split into groups . . .

2 - Sir Connery looks surprised as Sonic briskly passes him, taking Sally by the arm. Sally looks confused/cross. Rotor whispers to Tails, pointing at Connery's back. Rotor looks wary. Tails goes wide-eyed. Bunnie and Antoine exchange confused looks.

SONIC
Sounds good! I'll go with Sal. Ant and Bunnie go together, and you can team-up with Rotor and Tails. Let's go!

SALLY
SONIC?!

SONIC (small text in larger balloon - whisper)
I'll explain in a second Sally . . .

3 - Tails and Rotor feel their way along the dark, cavern wall with Sir Connery close behind.

DIALOGUE BOX
Once in the cavern . . .

TAILS
It sure has been easy going so far . . .

CONNERY
Consider it a temporary blessing, young one.

4 - Tails and Rotor enter into a large cavern room. They gasp in horror as they see the true Sir Connery bound to the wall with black energy bands. His sword is driven deep into the ground.

TAILS & ROTOR
Sir Connery?!

CONNERY
Quickly, lads! My sword!

5 - Tails and Rotor run for the sword.

-Page 6 Continued-

6 - Tendrils of black energy grab Tails and Rotor, pulling them against the cavern walls. The false Sir Connery's silhouette stands in the middle, hands on his hips.

FAKE CONNERY
Too little, too late . . .

-Page 7-

1 - Bunnie and Antoine make their way down a similar natural corridor. Antoine looks grim but sweats nervously while Bunnie smiles knowingly at him over her shoulder.

DIALOGUE BOX
Meanwhile . . .

ANTOINE

Why must we be splitting up? Ze strength is in the numbers, is it not?

BUNNIE
Now don't you go tellin' me you're scared of a lil' ol' cave!

2 - Bunnie manages a startled look at numerous gloved hands (young spider-ninjas) grabs her by the ears and shoulders, jerking her into another cavern room.

BUNNIE (being muffled)
Mmf?!

ANTOINE
Bunnie!

3 - Hero-time for Antoine. He charges into the room, sword drawn. Bunnie is already knocked out, three spider children looking up from her body.

ANTOINE
Unhand her!

4 - A spider ninja jumps down. Antoine swings his sword around, the ninja blocking with his katana.

5 - Antoine looks around, sweat beading on his brow. The ninjas advance on him, crawl on the ceiling over him, weapons ready.

ANTOINE
. . . mon dieu . . .

1 - Sonic helps Sally out of their own cavernous corridor and into another vast rock room.

DIALOGUE BOX
Meanwhile . . .

SALLY
I hope the others are doing as well as we are.

SONIC
Ha! Don't worry, Sal. I'm sure they're having a ball.

2 - Sally points over Sonic's shoulder, the latter turning suddenly.

SALLY
Sonic, look!

3 - Sonic and Sally look at the massive stone ring - the Rune Gate. Two of the stones glow eerily as two runes overlap, apparently changing places.

SALLY
The Rune Gate!

SONIC
Yeah, and it looks like Naugus is getting close to unlocking it!

4 - Sonic and Sally turn quickly to find the false Sir Connery standing, surrounded by the spider ninjas. Connery smiles cruelly as all the villains have an unearthly glow to their eyes.

CONNERY
Very true! It would only take a few more hours. You two, however, will hurry things along.

SALLY
Sir Connery . . .?

CONNERY
Not quite, Princess.

5 - Connery's figure turns to dust and drops away from a goat in wizard's robes and hat - Damocles (S#46).

DAMOCLES
I am Damocles the Elder!

-Page 9-

1 - Sally tenses, dropping back a step. Sonic wrinkles his nose in confusion. Damocles addresses them with villains confidence.

SONIC
Who?

SALLY

Sonic, you were right!

SONIC
As usual. What's the deal, ya old goat?

DAMOCLES
I am the last surviving apprentice to the great Ixis Naugus! And like their mother before them, these spiderlings are sworn by honor and bound by magic to serve his will!

2 - Sally demands hotly, Sonic's face echoing her words.

SALLY
Where are the others?

3 - The room with Sir Connery, Tails and Rotor. The latter two struggle against their bonds while Connery hangs his head.

DIALOGUE BOX
Don't worry about them. They're all well taken care of!

ROTOR
Come on, Sir Connery! Fight! We can get out of this!

CONNERY
I'm afraid not, lad. My strength is spent from days of struggle.

4 - The sword takes the focus, Tails' eyes locking on it. Connery speaks from off-panel.

CONNERY
If only I could reach my blade - The Sword of Light! Its power could free us . . .

5 - Rotor and Connery look up at Tails, bewildered, as the cub closes his eyes and speaks softly.

TAILS
Sword of Light . . . I am the Chosen One . . . please, hear my words and aid us in our darkest hour!
-Page 9 Continued-

6 - The sword flashes brilliantly!

SOUND FX
FWASH!

1 - Back at the room with the Rune Gate, Sonic and Sally are overtaken by the spider ninjas, much to Damocles's delight.

DAMOCLES
My master told me through my dreams that I was to capture you all to ensure you wouldn't interfere! But when the Paladin came for me, I thought of a better idea!

2 - The spider ninjas wrestle Sonic and Sally to their knees and pin their arms behind them. They're pointed to the Rune Gate as Damocles laughs madly.

DAMOCLES
Why not use you, his worst enemies, to bring him back into this world? HAHAHAHAHA!

3 - Damocles turns to see the remaining heros behind him. Rotor holds up Bunnie while Sir Connery and Antoine support one another. Tails holds the Sword of Light and glowers at Damocles.

TAILS
Because he's staying put!

DAMOCLES
How . . .?
NO!

4 - Everyone winces as Tails holds up the sword. The blade flashes brilliantly. The spider ninjas recoil, releasing Sonic and Sally.

TAILS
You will no longer serve evil, Children of Uma! I hereby break your dark bond with the wizard!

5 - Sir Connery and Antoine take Damocles by the arms, subduing him. Sonic helps Sally to her feet.

DAMOCLES
Fools! You cannot stop the return of Ixis Naugus!

-Page 11-

1 - Sonic smirks and cracks his knuckles while looking at the Rune Gate.

SONIC
Is that so . . .?

2 - Damocles freaks out as Sonic zips around the Rune Gate, plucking out the stones and rearranging them.

DAMOCLES
Wait! What do you think you're doing? NO!
Don't mix up those runes! It took my master over ten years to get them in order!

3 - Sonic finishes, posing to the delight of the others.

SONIC
And it only took me a minute to hopelessly scramble them! How's that for talent?

4 - Outside the cave. The Freedom Fighters gather together as Connery holds Damocles to the side. Damocles's hands are bound behind him.

DIALOGUE BOX
Not long after . . .

SALLY
What now, Sir Connery?

CONNERY
I shall deal with this varlet and then consult the Ancient Walkers. If they approve, I would like to return to the service of my king.

SONIC
We'll keep a light on for you.

5 - Close-up on Sir Connery and Tails shaking hands, the Freedom Fighters beaming in the background.

CONNERY
And thank you, lad. I see great things in you.

TAILS
Thank you sir! I've learned from the best!

DIALOGUE BOX: THE END!